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It has been suggested that some offices are distempered once in three or four years and this is as good as annual white-washing. I recommend that such cases may be taken into account and rule 5 in the Act which prescribes annual white-washing may be suitably modified.

It has been represented that some employees in firms are required to make a security deposit and that a monthly deduction is made in the salary towards the payment of this security deposit. It has been suggested that provision should be made under section 34 for making such deductions. I recommend that where an employee agrees to such reductions they may be made and that section 34 may be amended suitably.

It has been represented that holidays for festivals should be allowed. I recommend this. It should be made compulsory in the case of establishments. In the case of shops, restaurants, cinemas, etc., to which the public resort on festival days it should be made obligatory to give a compensatory holiday to the employee concerned.

10. Some of the Assistant Inspectors of Labour have represented to me the following difficulties :—

The term "any business connected with establishment" occurring in section 2 (2) of the Act has not been defined. There have been cases where a shop was kept open on the day of weekly closures and the shop-keeper on being prosecuted contended that the shop was kept open for receiving goods and not for effecting sales. The Court accepted this plea and acquitted the accused. I recommend that the term "closed" should be defined so as to make the intention clear.

TRUTH ALONE TRIUMPHS

Appendix II.

[Vide answer to starred question No. 716 asked by Sri M. Narayana Kurup at the meeting of the Legislative Assembly held on 15th February 1955, page 515 supra.]

A detailed report on the dysentery epidemic in Agathi and Kavarathy islands.

I disembarked at Agathi island on 4th April 1954, with necessary medical equipments for the treatment of dysentery as per instructions to stay in the island to render medical aid to the dysentery cases till the epidemic subsided and then to proceed to Kavarathy.

2. Dysentery epidemic broke out in Agathi in the third week of January 1954 with its peak during the middle of February and, by the end of March 1954 the epidemic had subsided. The Assistant Surgeon Dr. Bhannunni Nair, who was in charge of Government Dispensary, Kavarathy, reached the island on 24th March 1954 with necessary medicines for treating dysentery cases.

When the dysentery epidemic was well in control he returned back on 29th March 1954 to Kavarathy island where the Government dispensary was located. He had already submitted a report to District Medical Officer, Malabar, and to the Collector of Malabar, regarding dysentery.

3. I reached the island six days after the return of Dr. Bhanunni Nair from Agathi to Kavarathy. There was no dysentery epidemic when I reached the island. I have already communicated this fact in my progress report, dated 10th April 1954, sent from Agathi to District Medical Officer, Malabar district. There were only seven cases during my whole period of stay in Agathi island. Even those seven cases were alright in every respect on examination except they gave the history of dysentery, probably made their appearance as out-patients for stocking sulphaguanidine tablets. However, they were issued with sulphaguanidine tablets to be on the safe side. There were quite a large number of out-patients suffering from other diseases, mainly, (1) trachoma and other diseases of the eyes, (2) brochial asthma and other diseases of the respiratory system, (3) diseases of the digestive system and (4) deficiency diseases. But most of the medicines collected by me from Headquarters Hospital, Kozhikode, was intended for treating dysentery and was not much use for treating other diseases. However, I had some medicines for other diseases also purchased by me for own use which were also freely utilized till they got exhausted. The dysentery epidemic had subsided completely and there were no cases of dysentery later.

4. My further stay at Agathi without medicines to treat other cases than dysentery would have served no purpose and if I had prolonged my stay for some more days at Agathi, the monsoon season would have forced me to continue my stay in Agathi during the whole of monsoon (six months) also. Meanwhile, I received information that dysentery had started spreading in Kavarathy and that those islanders were scared about the same. Hence, I left the island of Agathi on 10th April 1954 night to Kavarathy by a small odam with the help of the prevailing favourable winds to take charge of the Government dispensary from where the medical officer had already left on 4th April 1954 to mainland. I reached Kavarathy on the evening of 11th April 1954. Before leaving Agathi, I had instructed the Amin and the prominent men to let me know if there is any outbreak of dysentery again or outbreak of any other diseases in epidemic form. I have also instructed them that if the direction of the wind is not favourable to convey messages to me, but favourable to send the messages to mainland, or if sailing from Kavarathy to Agathi is not possible, the message should be sent to the authorities on the mainland, for immediate steps to rush medical aid.

5. Since after my arrival in Kavarathy, there were 64 new cases of frank dysentery with blood and mucus most of them serious and 40 cases of diarrhoea (without blood or mucus). Five cases including one emergency ward case died. Most of the cases

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including serious cases responded well to heavy doses of sulphaguanidine besides other usual mixtures like mist, pro-diarrhoea, kaolin, etc., and (intravenous) glucose and normal, saline in cases of dehydration. Vigilent precautions were taken to prevent the spread of the disease. Antiseptic lotion (2½ per cent cresol) was sent to the houses whenever the cases occurred and advices given about the disposal of excreta after disinfection and other precautions.

Dysentery is endemic in these islands sometimes taking epidemic proportions. The main reasons for this are—

(i) *Mal-nutrition.*—Normally 90 per cent of the islanders live a hand to mouth existence. During the monsoon months, the stock of rice and other eatables get exhausted by the middle of the season and famine conditions prevail. This was felt more so this year due to poor yield of coconuts.

(ii) *The source of water-supply.*—The water for drinking and cooking purpose are collected from subsoil step-wells and pits with sloping sandy banks which are usually polluted with all sorts of contamination including excreta, and great source of infection of water-borne diseases especially during rainy season.

(iii) *General sanitation and personal hygiene of islanders.*—There are no latrines system; the islanders defaecate in open ground all over the country-side and get into the public private step-wells for washing the anus and genitallia, from many of which water is drawn for cooking and drinking purpose also. People are dirty in their habits of living. The poultry feed mainly on human faeces and find free access into the houses even to the kitchen and great source of carrying infection.

(iv) *Certain social habits.*—Cooking utensils, etc., are not washed properly. Cooked food are usually eaten by many from the same pot or plate. They spit profusely inside their house. There are still many dirty habits which I don't mention here due to lack of space.

6. I gave lectures twice in May and June to the general public about the great necessity of protecting their wells from contamination of water by constructing steening with stones at least above the surface, etc., the various preventive measures to avoid spread of dysentery and of the great necessity of personal and community hygiene and keeping the general sanitation of the island, by making pit latrine, etc. The general sanitation of the island has improved vastly, but the steening of wells and such constructing works which involve time and money and local labour are not done. The Amin was very co-operative in enforcing sanitation of the island and used to take disciplinary action against the islander whenever I reported that a house or its premises were seen in bad sanitary condition. Only sporadic cases of dysentery occurs now. There was an epidemic of tropical ulcers also during the months of June and July 1954; there were 71 cases of tropical ulcers during June and July and in August they are also well on the decline.

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7. The existing arrangement of one dispensary functioning eight months in Kavarathy and four months in Agathi is not practicable. In this connection I beg to bring to your knowledge the undermentioned facts.

8. The Government dispensary was opened at Kavarathy in the year 1936 and the orders for the shifting of the dispensary to Agathi to function there for four months each year was simultaneously issued. Agathi is 36 miles north-west of Kavarathy and 208 miles from Kozhikode. It is the outermost of the Laccadive islands in the Arabian Sea. No country craft can sail in the rough sea during the whole of monsoon season, during the rest of the year, also sailing from one island to another is possible only in one direction and that too if one is fortunate to have the prevailing wind in the right direction and the current in the sea is favourable let along the risks involved to life and property, in those flimsy native odams. Almost every year serious cases of Agathi who needed medical aid were taken to the medical officer in Amin Divi island because even though that island is 65 miles away from Agathi, sailing to and from that island was possible, whereas the odam could not make headway against the wind between Agathi and Kavarathy islands blowing in the opposite direction. No medical officer can predict how many days he will be able to stay in Agathi. In fact, from the past records and files it will be seen that since after the starting of the dispensary only few medical officers could fix up his stay for about 8 months in Kavarathy and about 4 months in Agathi. Many of them could stay only few days, few had to cancel their trip to Agathi ultimately after awaiting a favourable wind for a long period. On very many occasions, the odam carrying the medical officer, staff and Government equipments of dispensary had been tossed about on the high waves for days together to the tune of the fury of storm and other inclement weather conditions, and ultimately landing up in some other island which is neither Kavarathy nor Agathi and sometimes being washed ashore (after several days ordeal without water even) on the mainland in a shipwrecked condition with broken mast and torn sails.

9. There were also many instances after the establishment of this dispensary when these islands of Agathi and Kavarathy were in the clutches of virulent epidemics like smallpox and cholera and that the medical officer though received information of the epidemic ravaging like wild fire taking a good toll of life, was absolutely helpless to render any medical aid since he could not reach the island making headway against the wind blowing in the opposite direction.

10. Taking into consideration the above facts, may I be permitted to express that whatever small amount the Government spends for the establishment of a dispensary on that island permanently will be a great boon to those helpless forlorn islanders of Agathi and will serve the medical officer from great predicaments.

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11. Some of Kavarathy islanders who had been to Amin Divi island to fetch rice from that island arrived here back yesterday. I gathered information from them that an odam had gone to that island from Agathi with a patient for treatment, that the Agathi islanders told them that after my departure from Agathi, dysentery again started spreading in Agathi which gained 'momentum' during the rainy season and that there were about 70 deaths from that disease, mostly children below 10 years of age. They also said according to information received, that the epidemic has again more or less subsided. These informations may be true or exaggerated. Any way, it is not possible to sail to Agathi island at least till the middle of November making headway against the prevailing wind blowing in the opposite direction.

APPENDIX III.

[Vide answer to starred question No. 723 asked by Sri V. Gopala Gounder at the meeting of the Legislative Assembly held on 15th February 1955, page 523 supra.]

Rules of constitution and working of the Half-yearly District Irrigation Conference.

The District Conferences should be held twice a year in February and August every year subject to such modification in the date and month as might be found necessary in individual cases. In districts where there are two or more Executive Engineers (e.g., Tanjore), two conferences a year should be held for each of the Public Works Department divisions. When one Executive Engineer looks after more than one district, two conferences a year should be held in each of the districts. One of the two conferences may be held in the off-season in summer and the other in the middle of cultivation season as considered desirable so that suggestions regarding irrigation matters may be put into execution in the following cultivation season or investigated at leisure in the off-season as the case may be.

2. The Executive Engineer concerned will be the secretary and convenor and the Collector will preside over the conference.

3. The conference should be attended by Revenue Divisional Officers, Subdivisional Officers, District Agricultural Officer, M.L.As. and M.L.Cs. of the district (if they are willing) and six representatives of the ryots selected from different areas in the district or division, as the case may be, by the Collector in consultation with the M.L.As. and M.L.Cs. of the area and the Executive Engineer concerned.

4. The conference will sit from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., unless the agenda is finished earlier, and consider the grievances of the ryots in regard to irrigation matters generally and any other matter